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The BOZZ CHRONICLES
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WELCOME TO THE PREMIERE OF *THE BOZZ CHRONICLES*. I'M *ARCHIE GOODWIN*, EDITOR OF MARVEL'S *EPIC COMICS* LINE AND I WANT TO SET SOMETHING *STRAIGHT!* NORMALLY IN OUR BOOKS, I USE THIS EDITORIAL SPACE TO SHAMELESSLY HYPE OUR OTHER TITLES -- SUCH AS *MOONSHADOW*, *STARSTRUCK*, AND *THE ONE*-- AND PROVE WHAT A GOOD SPORT I AM BY APPEARING IN ABSURD, VAGUELY STORY-RELATED COSTUMES OR SITUATIONS AS THE BUTT OF SOME WEAK JOKE. *WELL, NOT THIS TIME, FANS!* JUDGING FROM THE *EPIC MAIL* AND COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING *PERSONAL APPEARANCES*, YOU'RE GETTING THE *WRONG IDEA!* YOU'RE ASSUMING WE HAVE ALL KINDS OF *WEIRD, CRAZY REASONS* FOR DOING AN *EPIC COMIC*. YOU DON'T *KNOW* THE SERIOUS, CREATIVE THINKING THAT DETERMINES *WHAT* WE PUBLISH! WITH *BOZZ*, WE WERE WON OVER BY WRITER/CREATOR *DAVID MICHELINIE'S* UNUSUAL CONCEPT; HIS DEFT USE OF FANTASY IN AN AUTHENTIC HISTORICAL SETTING, THE WARMTH OF HIS CHARACTERIZATION, AND THE WIT AND EXCITEMENT IN HIS FINAL SCRIPTS. CLINCHING OUR DECISION WAS THE ART OF *BRET BLEVINS*; HIS EYE FOR PERIOD DETAIL AND ACCURACY, HIS MASTERFUL VISUALIZATION OF AN ALIEN YET APPEALING LEAD, AND HIS STRAIGHTFORWARD BUT ELEGANTLY SEXY STORYTELLING.

THAT'S WHY WE'RE DOING *THE BOZZ CHRONICLES!* AND IF YOU STILL THINK I HAVE SOME OTHER *SNEAKY REASON* FOR BEING DRAWN TO THIS MATERIAL, THEN MAYBE I JUST WON'T SHOW MY *TAIL* AROUND THESE PARTS ANYMORE!

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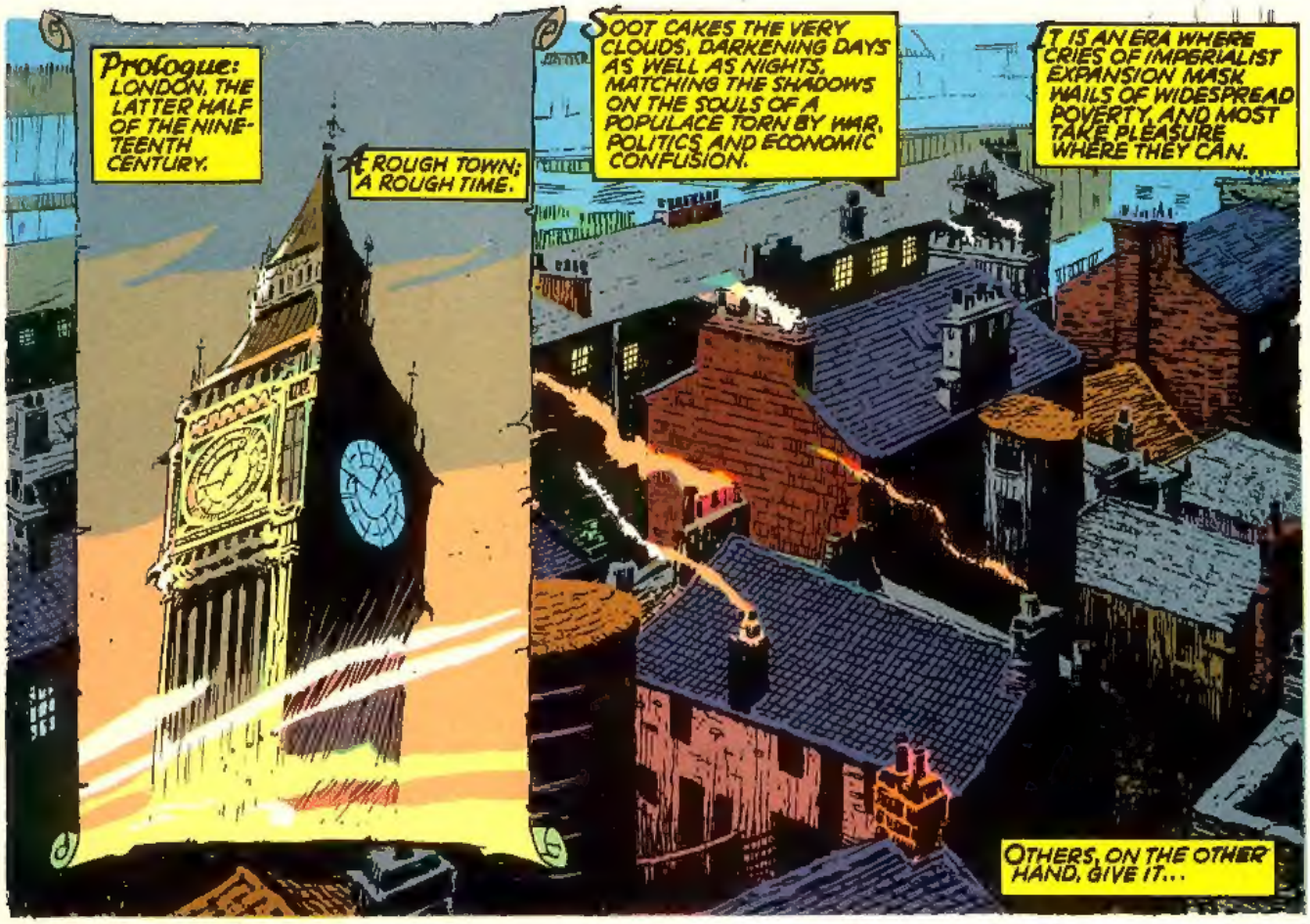

Prologue: LONDON, THE LATTER HALF OF THE NINE-TEENTH CENTURY.
A ROUGH TOWN; A ROUGH TIME.
SOOT CAKES THE VERY CLOUDS, DARKENING DAYS AS WELL AS NIGHTS, MATCHING THE SHADOWS ON THE SOULS OF A POPULACE TORN BY WAR, POLITICS AND ECONOMIC CONFUSION.
IT IS AN ERA WHERE CRIES OF IMPERIALIST EXPANSION MASK WAILS OF WIDESPREAD POVERTY, AND MOST TAKE PLEASURE WHERE THEY CAN.
OTHERS, ON THE OTHER HAND, GIVE IT...

...FOR A PRICE.
WATCH YER STEP, GUV. THESE STAIRS CAN BE RIGHT NASTY TO THOSE WOT DON'T KNOW 'EM.

I-I'M BEGINNING TO HAVE SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT THIS, MISS FLYNN. PERHAPS WE SHOULDN'T--
AH, C'MON, GUV, RELAX! AN' STUFF THAT "MISS FLYNN" MALARKEY.
ALL ME GENTLEMAN FRIENDS CALLS ME MANDY.

V-VERY WELL, 'MANDY.' BUT YOU SEE, I'M A BUSINESSMAN. AND IF THE FAINTEST HINT OF SCANDAL WERE TO--
NOT TA WORRY, GUV. I BEEN USIN' THIS ABANDONED LOFT FER MONTHS NOW--
--AN' THE ONLY NEIGHBOURS TA FRET OVER ARE A COUPLA RATS AN' THE STRAY DRUNKARD SLEEPIN' 'IS PINTS OFF IN THE 'ALLWAY.
I'M AFRAID YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. I-IT'S NOT JUST MY BUSINESS I'M CONCERNED ABOUT. IT'S MY...*ahem*... WIFE.
OOOOOOOH!
YA'VE GOT A BLUSHIN' BRIDE AT 'OME, YA SLY DOG!
WELL, DON'T BE GETTIN' YER KNICKERS IN A DITHER.
MANDY FLYNN'S ALWAYS BEEN ONE TA KEEP A--
--SECRET?
GOOD LORD!

ROUGH TIMES IN A ROUGH TOWN ...JUST GOT ROUGHER!
The BOZZ CHRONICLES
'ERE, NOW, WOT'S ALL THIS?!

YA'VE GOT SOME NERVE, YA 'AVE! 'ERE I AM TRYIN' TA MAKE A LIVIN'--
--AN YOU GO AN' SCARE OFF ME ONLY--

--GOR! 'E AIN'T RIGHT, THIS ONE! LOOKS LIKE SOMETHIN' OUTTA ONE O' THEM FREAK CARNIVALS! BUT--

--'IS EYES!
I-I AIN'T NEVER SEEN NOTHIN' SO...SAD.

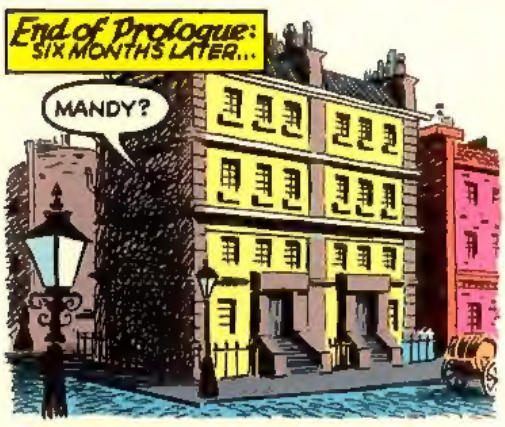
SAY, GUV, YA LOOK LIKE YA NEED A FRIEND--AN' ME, I'VE 'AD LOTS O' PRACTICE!
SO WHYN'T YA JUST SLIP THAT NOOSE OFF AN' COME DOWN TA OL' MANDY, eh?

ATTABOY. STRETCHIN' YER NECK WON'T GET YA NOTHIN' BUT TALLER, AN' BLIMEY, YA DON'T NEED *THAT!*

SINCE I SEEM TA FIND MESELF, ah, UNEXPECTEDLY AVAILABLE, WOT SAY WE GRAB US A CUPPA, AN' 'AVE A LITTLE CHAT, eh?

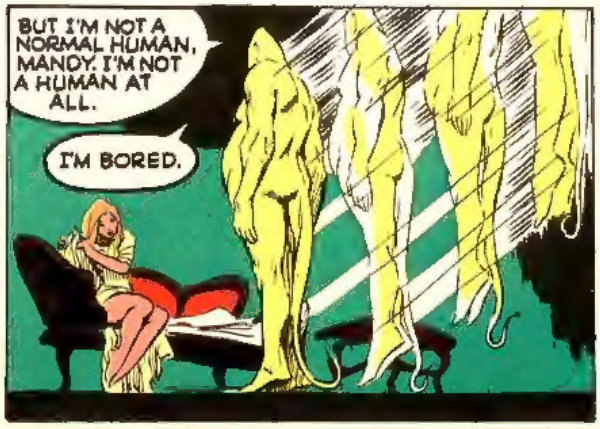
THAT'S IT, DUCKY. SUICIDE AIN'T NO ANSWER, IT AIN'T.
ANY PROBLEM CAN BE SOLVED IF YA JUST PUT YER MIND TO IT!
BUT, AS AMANDA CHARELLE FLYNN WILL FIND IN THE DAYS AHEAD...

...SOME PROBLEMS TAKE A BIT MORE SOLVING THAN OTHERS!


End of Prologue:
SIX MONTHS LATER...
MANDY?

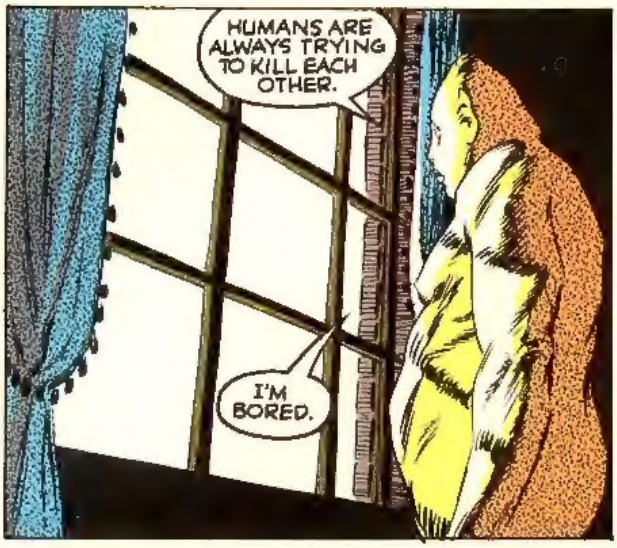
I'M AFRAID WE MUST OBTAIN MORE VOLUMES. I'VE ALREADY READ ALL OF THESE. TWICE.
I'M BORED.

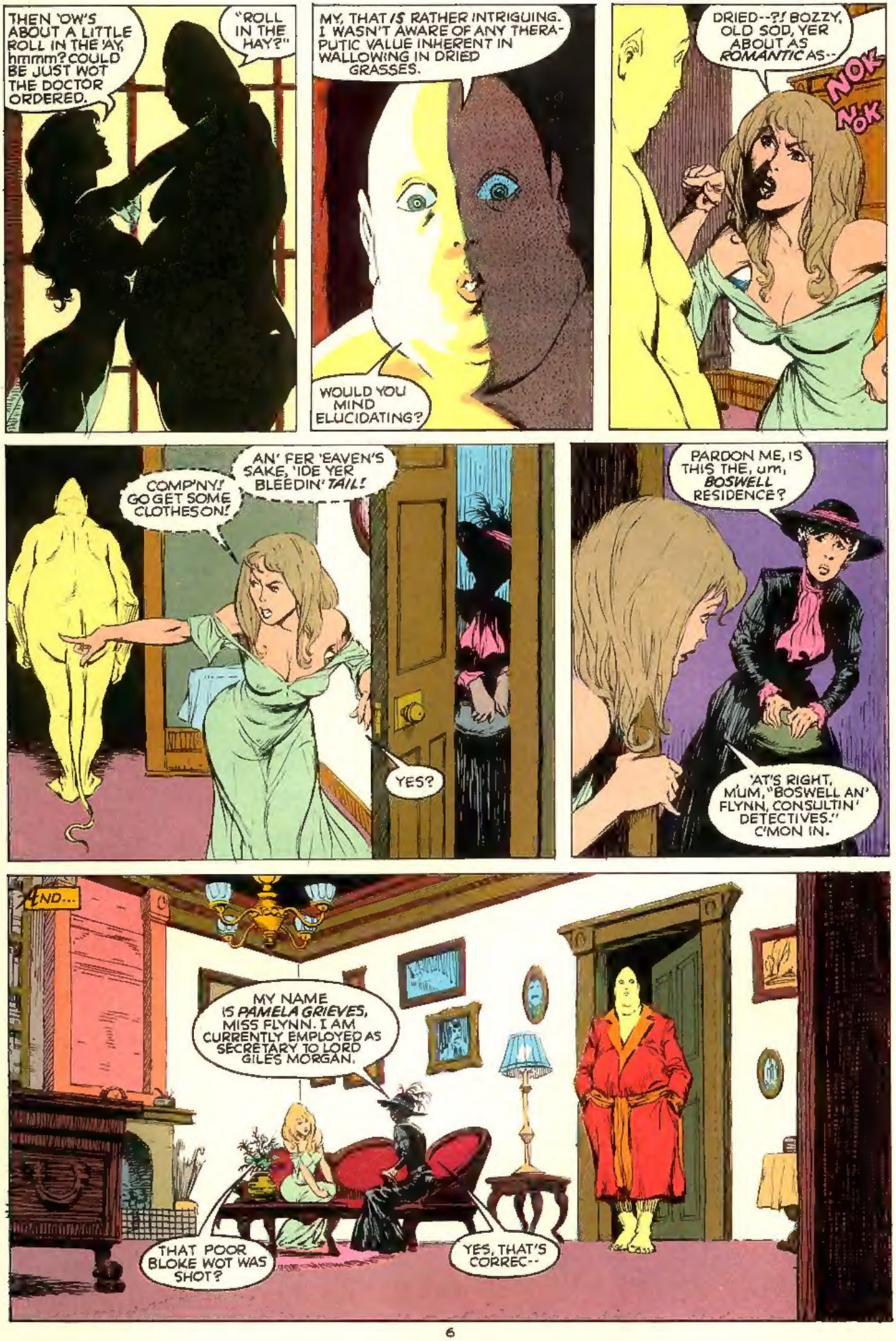
GOR, BOZZY, I WISH YA DIDN'T FIND CLOTHES SO RESTRICTIN'--IT'S 'ARD TA KEEP ME CONCENTRATION WHEN YA PARADE AROUND IN THE ALTOGETHER LIKE THAT.
AN' FER CHRISSAKES USE A LADDER LIKE A NORMAL 'UMAN BEAN!

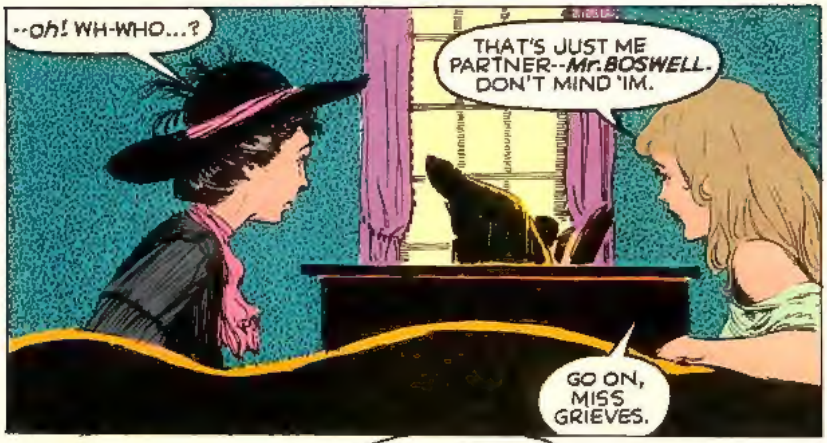

BUT I'M NOT A NORMAL HUMAN, MANDY. I'M NOT A HUMAN AT ALL.
I'M BORED.

Uh-oh, THAT LOOK IN 'IS EYES, LIKE WHEN I FIRST FOUND 'IM.
IF I DON'T GET 'IS ATTENTION SOON, I'LL 'AVE TA START 'IDIN' SHARP OBJECTS!

Uh, SAY, BOZZY, 'ERE'S SOMETHIN' INTERESTIN'. LORD GILES MORGAN, BIG-WIG WITH THE CONSER-VATIVE PARTY--THEY SAY HE'S A SHOO-IN FER PRIME MINISTER SOME DAY--
LONDON CITY
LORD GILES MOR
--GOT 'ISSELF SHOT BY POLITICAL ZEALOTS LAST WEEK!

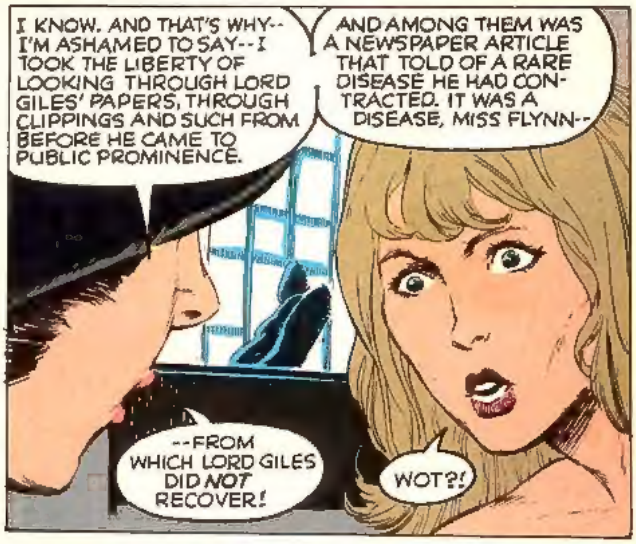

HUMANS ARE ALWAYS TRYING TO KILL EACH OTHER.
I'M BORED.


THEN 'OW'S ABOUT A LITTLE ROLL IN THE 'AY, hmmm? COULD BE JUST WOT THE DOCTOR ORDERED.
"ROLL IN THE HAY?"
MY, THAT *IS* RATHER INTRIGUING. I WASN'T AWARE OF ANY THERAPUTIC VALUE INHERENT IN WALLOWING IN DRIED GRASSES.
WOULD YOU MIND ELUCIDATING?
DRIED--?! BOZZY, OLD SOD, YER ABOUT AS *ROMANTIC* AS--
NOK
NOK
COMP'NY! GO GET SOME CLOTHES ON!
AN' FER 'EAVEN'S SAKE, 'IDE YER BLEEDIN' *TAIL!*
YES?
PARDON ME, IS THIS THE, um, *BOSWELL* RESIDENCE?
'AT'S RIGHT, MUM, "BOSWELL AN' FLYNN, CONSULTIN' DETECTIVES." C'MON IN.
END...
MY NAME IS *PAMELA GRIEVES*, MISS FLYNN. I AM CURRENTLY EMPLOYED AS SECRETARY TO LORD GILES MORGAN.
THAT POOR BLOKE WOT WAS SHOT?
YES, THAT'S CORREC--


--oh! WH-WHO...?
THAT'S JUST ME PARTNER--Mr. BOSWELL. DON'T MIND 'IM.
GO ON, MISS GRIEVES.

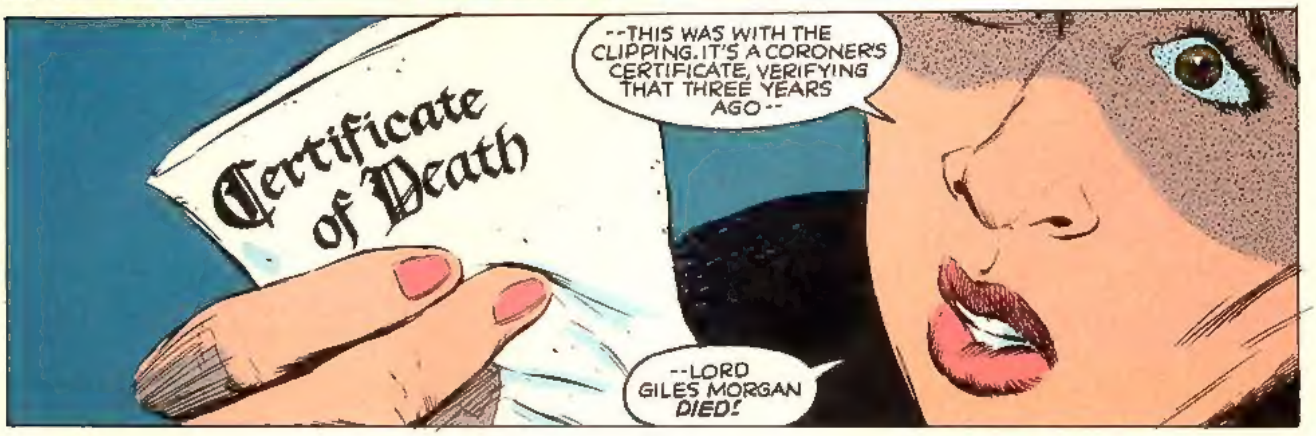
Er, VERY WELL. AS IT HAPPENS, I WAS WITH LORD GILES WHEN HE WAS SHOT.

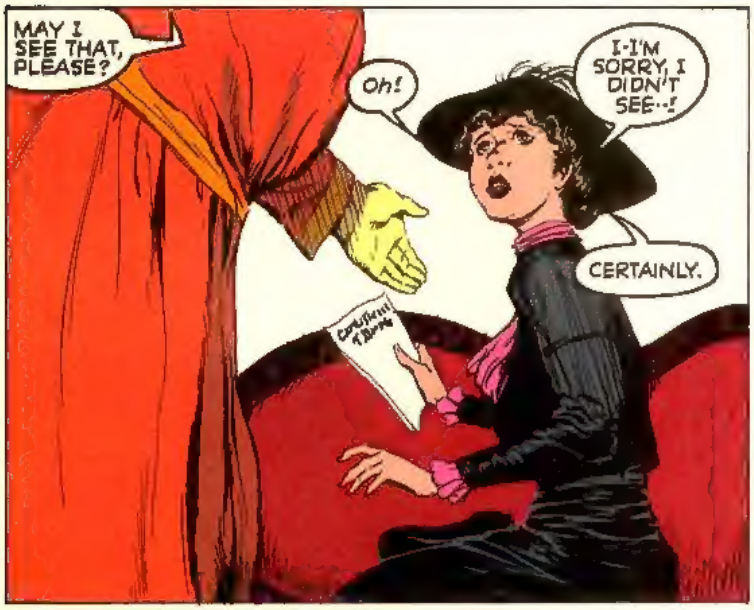
AND THOUGH REPORTS SAY HE SUSTAINED ONLY MINOR INJURIES, I SAW THE BULLET GO RIGHT THROUGH HIS HEART!
THAT'S A BIT 'ARD TA BELIEVE, M'UM. THE NEWS RAGS SAY 'E WAS BACK IN PARLIAMENT TODAY--QUITE A FEAT FER SOMEONE WOT'S MORTALLY WOUNDED!

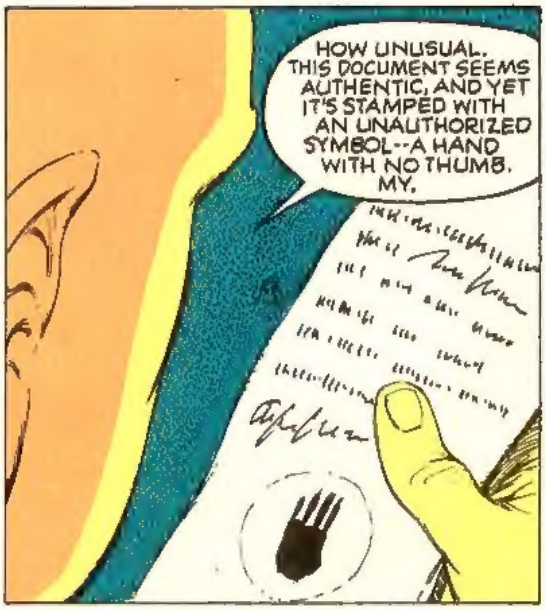

I KNOW. AND THAT'S WHY--I'M ASHAMED TO SAY--I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF LOOKING THROUGH LORD GILES' PAPERS, THROUGH CLIPPINGS AND SUCH FROM BEFORE HE CAME TO PUBLIC PROMINENCE.
AND AMONG THEM WAS A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE THAT TOLD OF A RARE DISEASE HE HAD CONTRACTED. IT WAS A DISEASE, MISS FLYNN--
--FROM WHICH LORD GILES DID NOT RECOVER!
WOT?!

BLIMEY, THIS LADY'S A COUPLA SHILLIN'S SHORT OF A POUND!
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, THAT I MUST BE AN ASYLUM CASE--

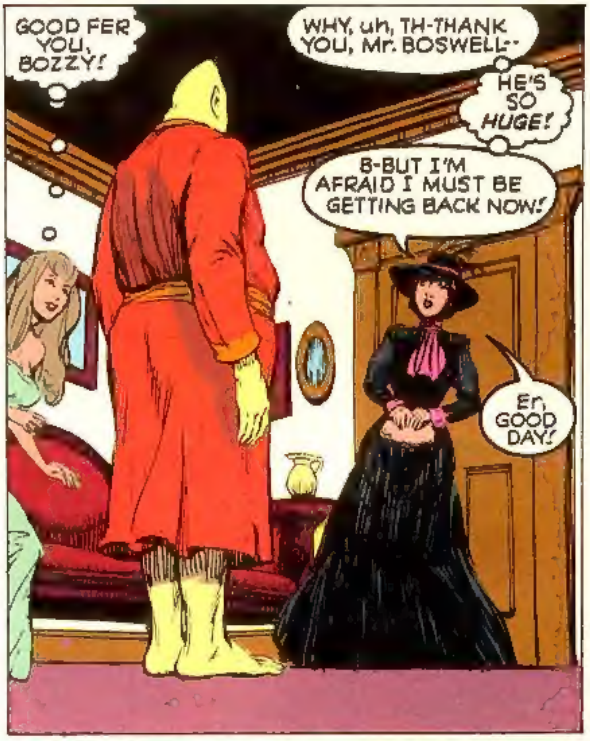
--AND THAT'S WHY I BROUGHT PROOF!
PROOF?
YES--

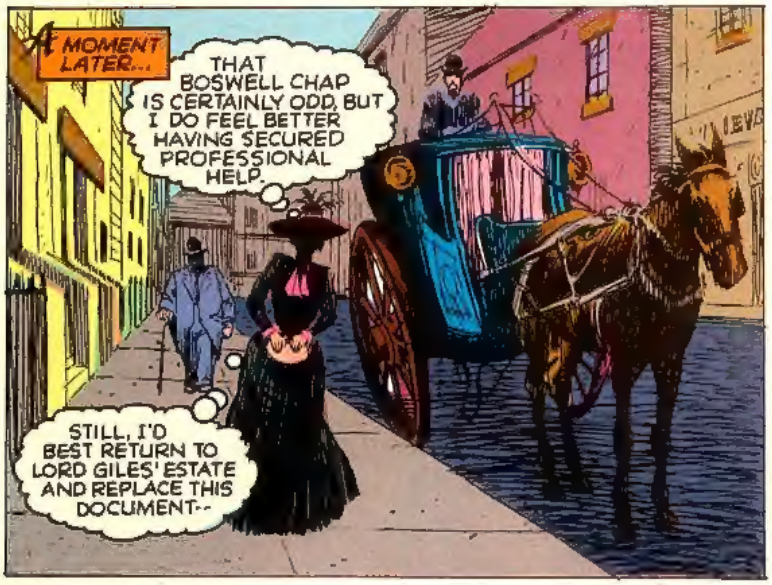

Certificate of Death
--THIS WAS WITH THE CLIPPING. IT'S A CORONER'S CERTIFICATE, VERIFYING THAT THREE YEARS AGO--
--LORD GILES MORGAN DIED!


MAY I SEE THAT, PLEASE?
Oh!
I-I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T SEE--!
CERTAINLY.


HOW UNUSUAL. THIS DOCUMENT SEEMS AUTHENTIC, AND YET IT'S STAMPED WITH AN UNAUTHORIZED SYMBOL--A HAND WITH NO THUMB. MY.

I DO BELIEVE WE'LL TAKE YOUR CASE, MISS GRIEVES.


GOOD FER YOU, BOZZY!
WHY, uh, TH-THANK YOU, Mr. BOSWELL--
HE'S SO HUGE!
B-BUT I'M AFRAID I MUST BE GETTING BACK NOW!
Er, GOOD DAY!


A MOMENT LATER...
THAT BOSWELL CHAP IS CERTAINLY ODD, BUT I DO FEEL BETTER HAVING SECURED PROFESSIONAL HELP.
STILL, I'D BEST RETURN TO LORD GILES' ESTATE AND REPLACE THIS DOCUMENT--

--BEFORE ANYONE NOTICES THAT IT'S MISSING!

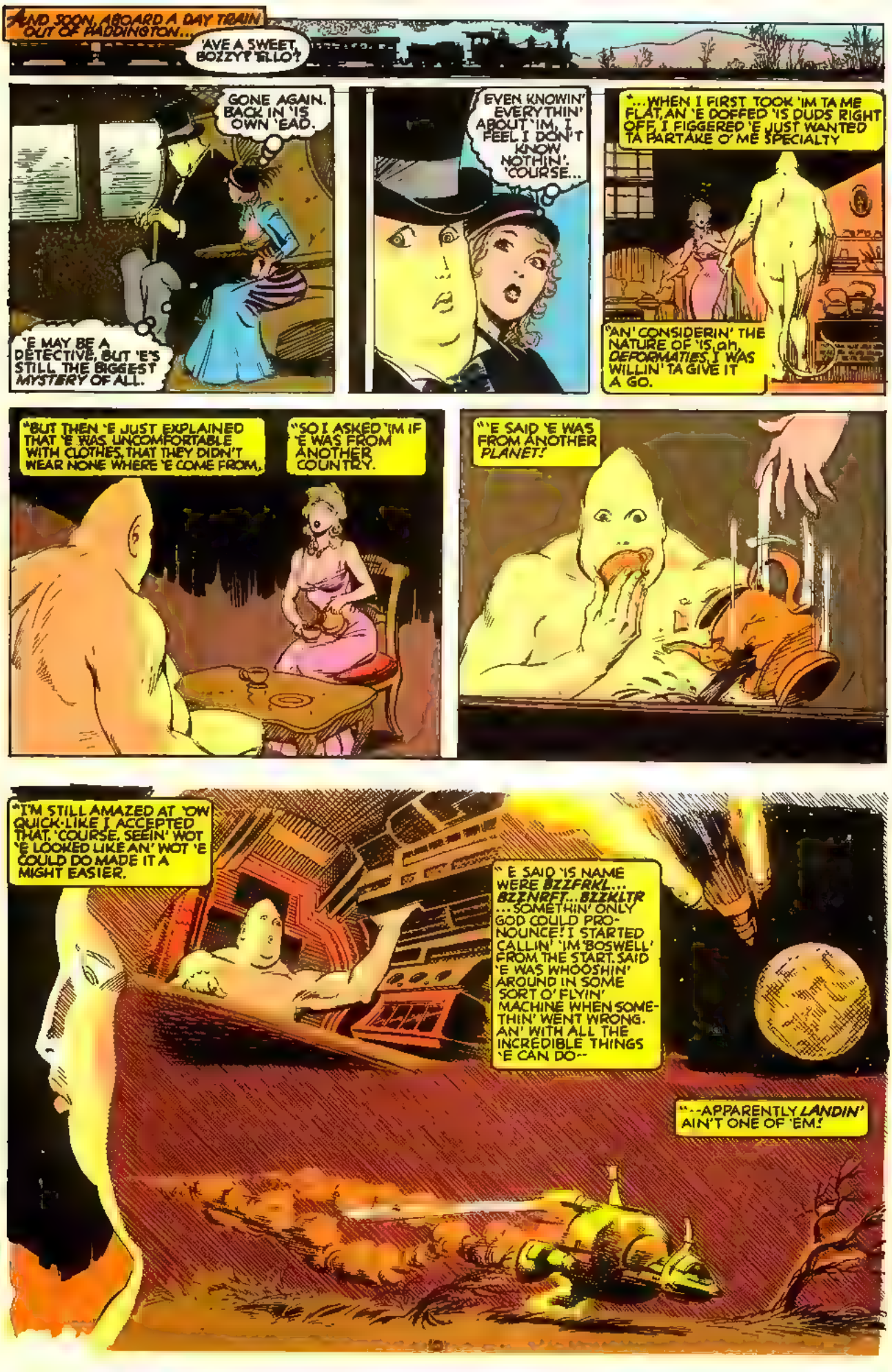
HURRY, MANDY. THE MORGAN ESTATE IS IN DARTMOOR, AND WE MUST SECURE TRANSPORTATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!
JUST KEEP YER TROUSERS ON-- *LIT'RALLY!* I'LL BE DONE AS SOON'S I PUT THIS LAST PIN IN MY--

KRAKOW
?!
OUTSIDE!
C'MON!

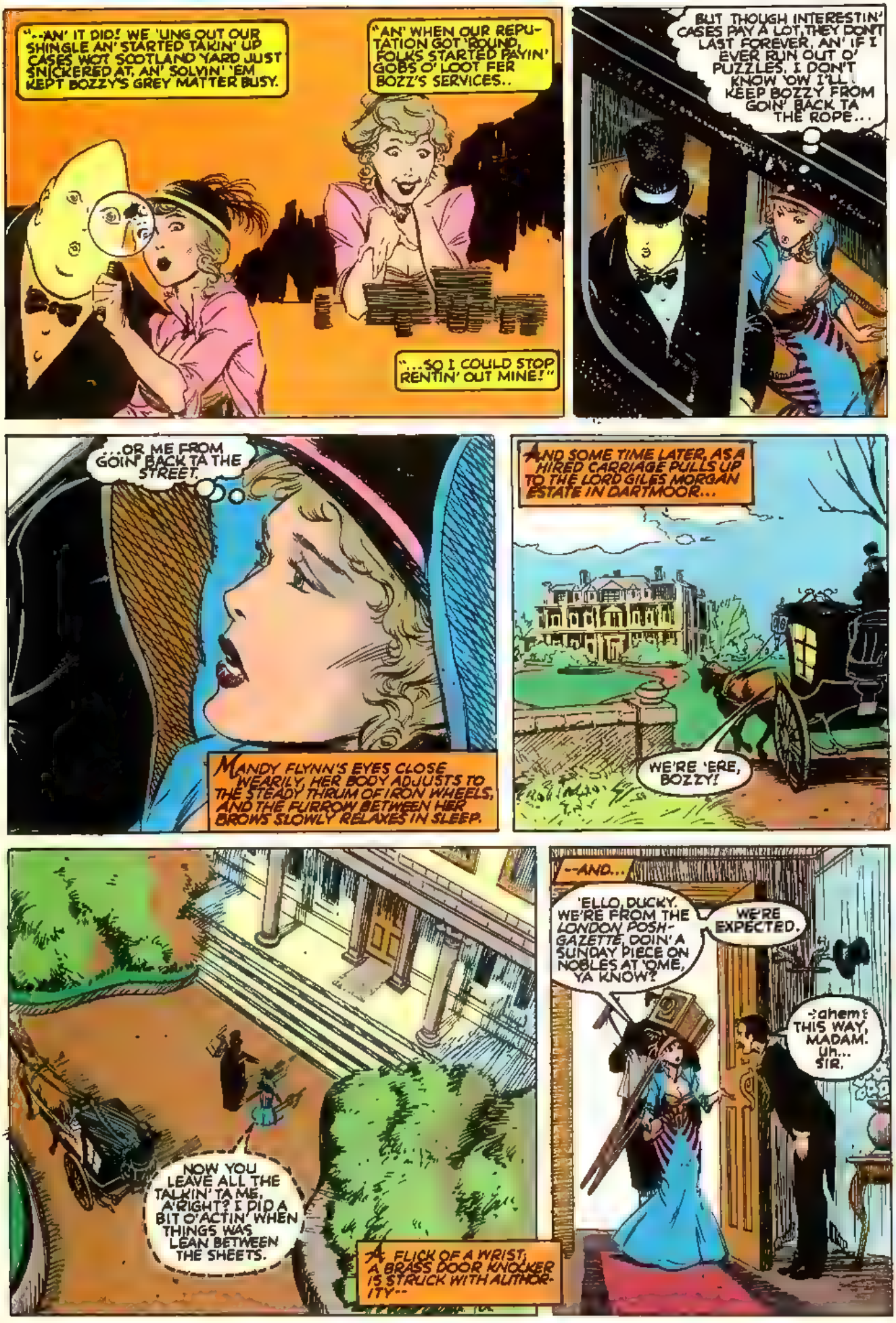
CLEAR THE WAY, THERE! MOVE ASIDE, I SAY--
--GOR BLIMEY! M-MISS GRIEVES?!?
SHE WAS HIT BY LIGHTNIN', SHE WAS! I SAW THE WHOLE THING!

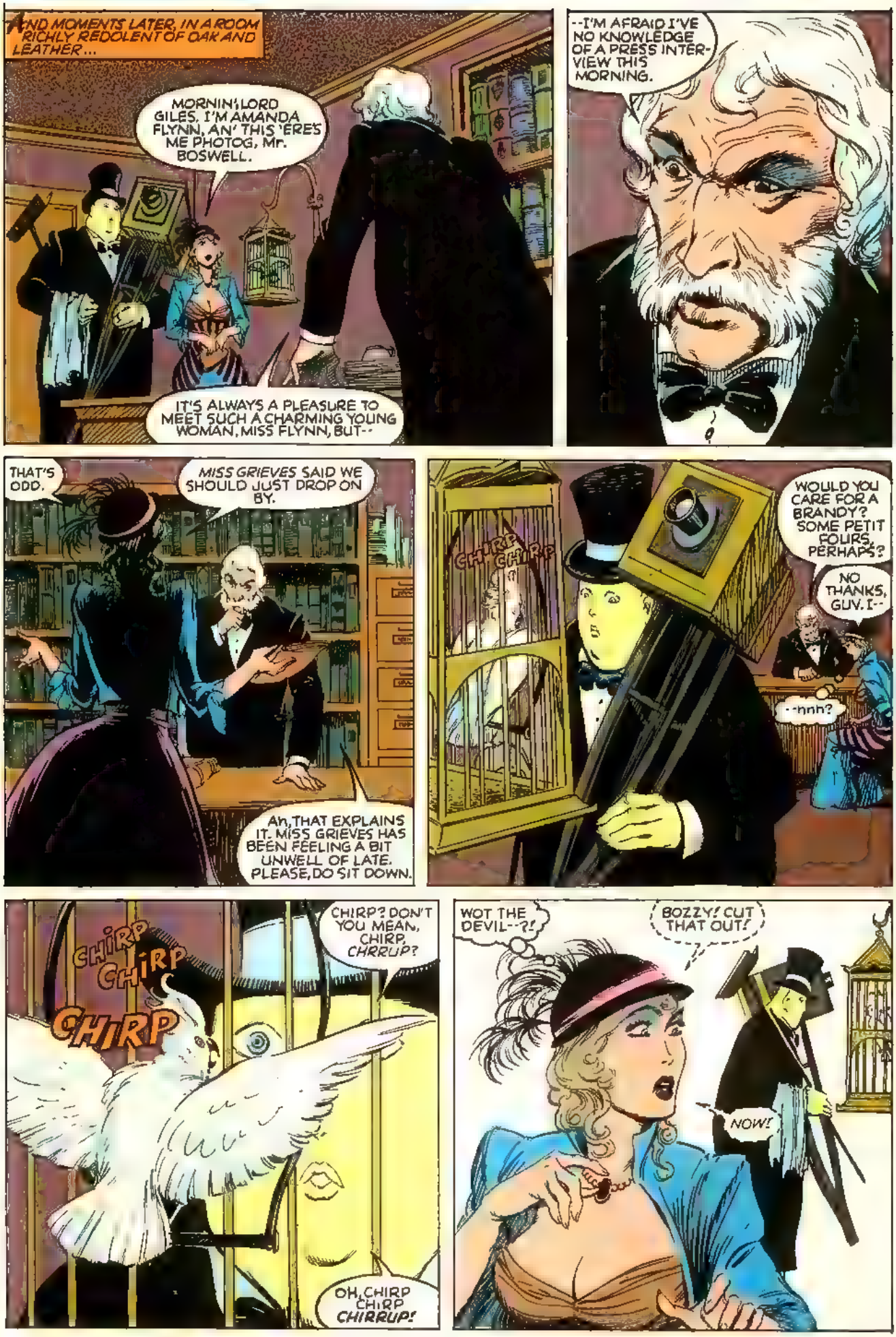
AYE, LOOKS JOOST LOIK ME COOSIN WOT WUZ STROOK DOON BY A BOLT LAST SOOMER!
B-BUT, THERE'S NOT A CLOUD IN THE SKY!

UH, YA SURE YA STILL WANNA GO THROUGH WITH THIS, BOZZY?
BOZZ?
sigh RIGHT


AND SOON, ABOARD A DAY TRAIN OUT OF PADDINGTON...
'AVE A SWEET, BOZZY? 'ELLO?
GONE AGAIN. BACK IN 'IS OWN 'EAD.
'E MAY BE A DETECTIVE, BUT 'E'S STILL THE BIGGEST MYSTERY OF ALL.
EVEN KNOWIN' EVERYTHIN' ABOUT 'IM, I FEEL I DON'T KNOW NOTHIN'. 'COURSE...
"...WHEN I FIRST TOOK 'IM TA ME FLAT, AN 'E DOFFED 'IS DUDS RIGHT OFF, I FIGGERED 'E JUST WANTED TA PARTAKE O' ME SPECIALTY
"AN' CONSIDERIN' THE NATURE OF 'IS, ah, DEFORMATIES, I WAS WILLIN' TA GIVE IT A GO.
"BUT THEN 'E JUST EXPLAINED THAT 'E WAS UNCOMFORTABLE WITH CLOTHES, THAT THEY DIDN'T WEAR NONE WHERE 'E COME FROM.
"SO I ASKED 'IM IF 'E WAS FROM ANOTHER COUNTRY.
"'E SAID 'E WAS FROM ANOTHER PLANET!
"I'M STILL AMAZED AT 'OW QUICK-LIKE I ACCEPTED THAT, 'COURSE, SEEIN' WOT 'E LOOKED LIKE AN' WOT 'E COULD DO MADE IT A MIGHT EASIER.
"'E SAID 'IS NAME WERE BZZFRKL... BZZNRFT... BZZKLTR ...SOMETHIN' ONLY GOD COULD PRONOUNCE! I STARTED CALLIN' 'IM 'BOSWELL' FROM THE START. SAID 'E WAS WHOOSHIN' AROUND IN SOME SORT O' FLYIN' MACHINE WHEN SOMETHIN' WENT WRONG. AN' WITH ALL THE INCREDIBLE THINGS 'E CAN DO--
"--APPARENTLY LANDIN' AIN'T ONE OF 'EM!

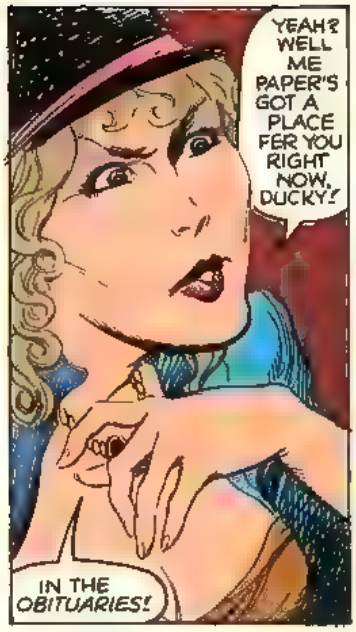
"'E GOT OUT WITH 'IS LIFE, BUT NOTHIN' MORE.
ALL 'E WANTED WAS TA GET-- BACK TA WHERE 'E COME FROM
-BUT WITH WOT WAS LEFT OF 'IS MACHINE, THERE WEREN'T NO CHANCE O' THAT.
"SO 'E WANDERED ABOUT, JUST LOOKIN' AN' LEARNIN'; PICKED UP OUR LINGO REAL EASY.
'BUT WE WAS TA 'IM WOT THEM APES DOWN IN AFERKA ARE TA US, AN' E SOON REALISED 'E WOULDN'T NE VER FIT IN
'THERE WEREN'T NOTHIN' FER 'IM TA DO. NOTHIN' TA KEEP 'IS MIND FROM WANDRIN' BACK TA 'IS 'OME, TA WOT AN' WHO 'E LEFT BEHIND
HARRY STONE BOOT AND SHOE COMPANY
"'E GOT BORED, AN' REAL MELANCHOLY-LIKE, AN' FINALLY DECIDED THERE WEREN'T BUT ONE WAY OUT.
"AN' THAT'S WHEN I FOUND 'IM.
"BUT WHEN 'E TOLD ME THE PROBLEM, I AD ME AN IDEA I SHOWED 'IM THIS BOOK A GENTLEMAN FRIEND GIVE ME, FULL O' STORIES BY SOME YANK NAMED POE, ALL ABOUT MYSTERIES AN' CRIME AN' ALL
"I FIGGERED THAT KEEPIN' 'IM BUSY WITH STUFF LIKE THAT MIGHT DO THE TRICK--


"--AN' IT DID! WE 'UNG OUT OUR SHINGLE AN' STARTED TAKIN' UP CASES WOT SCOTLAND YARD JUST SNICKERED AT, AN' SOLVIN' 'EM KEPT BOZZY'S GREY MATTER BUSY.
"AN' WHEN OUR REPUTATION GOT 'ROUND, FOLKS STARTED PAYIN' GOBS O' LOOT FER BOZZ'S SERVICES..
"...SO I COULD STOP RENTIN' OUT MINE!"
BUT THOUGH INTERESTIN' CASES PAY A LOT, THEY DON'T LAST FOREVER. AN' IF I EVER RUN OUT O' PUZZLES, I DON'T KNOW 'OW I'LL KEEP BOZZY FROM GOIN' BACK TA THE ROPE...
...OR ME FROM GOIN' BACK TA THE STREET.
MANDY FLYNN'S EYES CLOSE WEARILY, HER BODY ADJUSTS TO THE STEADY THRUM OF IRON WHEELS, AND THE FURROW BETWEEN HER BROWS SLOWLY RELAXES IN SLEEP.
AND SOME TIME LATER, AS A HIRED CARRIAGE PULLS UP TO THE LORD GILES MORGAN ESTATE IN DARTMOOR...
WE'RE 'ERE, BOZZY!
NOW YOU LEAVE ALL THE TALKIN' TA ME, A'RIGHT? I DID A BIT O' ACTIN' WHEN THINGS WAS LEAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS.
A FLICK OF A WRIST, A BRASS DOOR KNOCKER IS STRUCK WITH AUTHORITY--
--AND...
'ELLO, DUCKY. WE'RE FROM THE LONDON POSH-GAZETTE, DOIN' A SUNDAY PIECE ON NOBLES AT 'OME, YA KNOW?
WE'RE EXPECTED.
-ahem- THIS WAY, MADAM. UH... SIR.

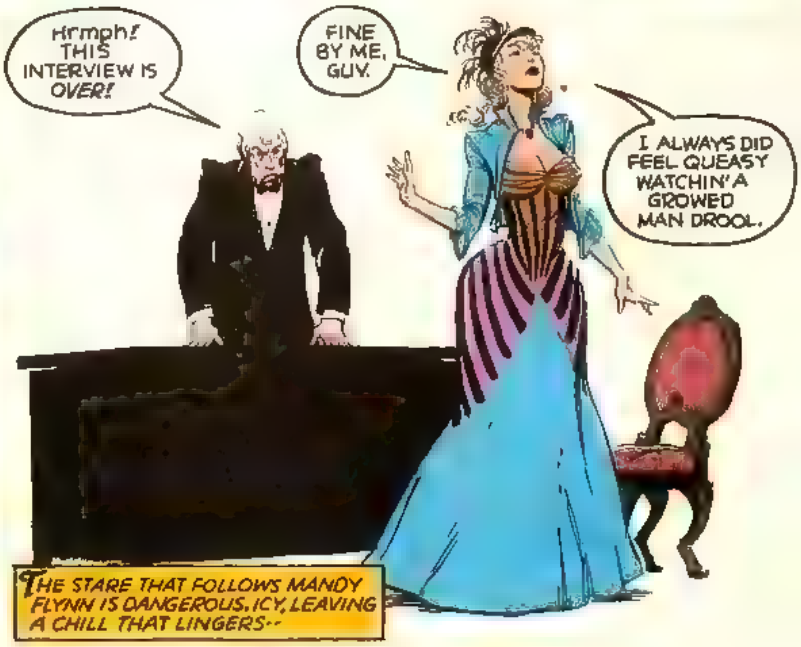

AND MOMENTS LATER, IN A ROOM RICHLY REDOLENT OF OAK AND LEATHER...
MORNIN', LORD GILES. I'M AMANDA FLYNN, AN' THIS 'ERE'S ME PHOTOG, Mr. BOSWELL.
IT'S ALWAYS A PLEASURE TO MEET SUCH A CHARMING YOUNG WOMAN, MISS FLYNN, BUT--
--I'M AFRAID I'VE NO KNOWLEDGE OF A PRESS INTERVIEW THIS MORNING.
THAT'S ODD.
MISS GRIEVES SAID WE SHOULD JUST DROP ON BY.
Ah, THAT EXPLAINS IT. MISS GRIEVES HAS BEEN FEELING A BIT UNWELL OF LATE. PLEASE, DO SIT DOWN.
CHIRP CHIRP
WOULD YOU CARE FOR A BRANDY? SOME PETIT FOURS, PERHAPS?
NO THANKS, GUV. I--
--nnh?
CHIRP CHIRP CHIRP
CHIRP? DON'T YOU MEAN, CHIRP, CHRRUP?
OH, CHIRP CHIRP CHIRRUP!
WOT THE DEVIL--?!
BOZZY! CUT THAT OUT!
NOW!

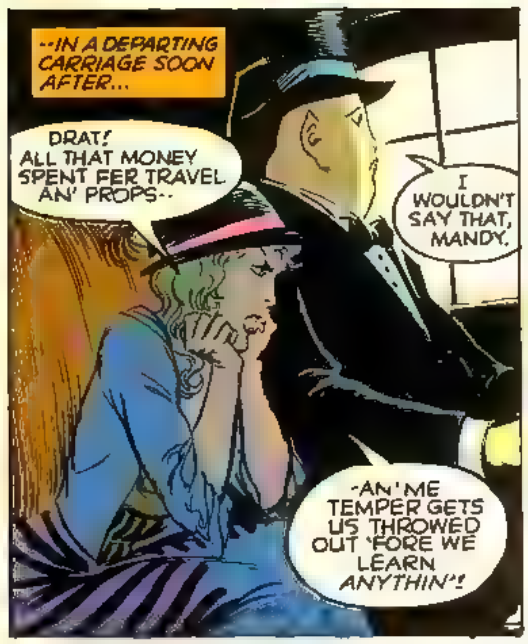
'E'S A LITTLE SLOW, BUT 'E'S GREAT WITH A FLASH PAN.
NOW, um, WH-WHERE WERE WE?
BRANDY, AMANDA AND PHEASANT? TONIGHT?
I'M AN IMPORTANT MAN, MY DEAR--
--AND ONE WHO APPRECIATES A WOMAN OF YOUR CONSIDERABLE CHARMS.

IN FACT, WHEN I BECOME PRIME MINISTER, I MAY WELL FIND A PLACE FOR YOU.
IN MY BACK ROOMS, OF COURSE.


YEAH? WELL ME PAPER'S GOT A PLACE FER YOU RIGHT NOW, DUCKY!
IN THE OBITUARIES!

WHA--?!
H-HOW DID--
WHAT DO YOU--


Hrmph! THIS INTERVIEW IS OVER!
FINE BY ME, GUV.
I ALWAYS DID FEEL QUEASY WATCHIN' A GROWED MAN DROOL.
THE STARE THAT FOLLOWS MANDY FLYNN IS DANGEROUS, ICY, LEAVING A CHILL THAT LINGERS--


--IN A DEPARTING CARRIAGE SOON AFTER...
DRAT! ALL THAT MONEY SPENT FER TRAVEL AN' PROPS--
I WOULDN'T SAY THAT, MANDY.
-AN' ME TEMPER GETS US THROWED OUT 'FORE WE LEARN ANYTHIN'!

I LEARNED THAT SEVERAL FILE CABINETS WERE REMOVED FROM THE ESTATE JUST YESTERDAY. THEY WERE TAKEN TO SOMEPLACE CALLED "END CROSS ROAD.
EH? 'OW'D YA FIND THAT OUT?
Oh .

...A LITTLE BIRD TOLD ME

THE TRIP TO LONDON GOES QUICKLY, SMOOTHED BY THE PROMISE OF FRESH TRAILS TO FOLLOW. AND SOON, AT THE HEAD OF END CROSS ROAD...
STAY RIGHT 'ERE, BOZZY, WHILE I TRIES TA GET US SOME INFO. AN' DON'T GO TALKIN' TA NO ONE, YA 'EAR?
HOWEVER, AS MANDY ENTERS A NEARBY TOBACCONIST'S..
PARDON ME, SIR, COULD YOU TELL ME IF THERE'S AN ESTABLISHMENT IN THIS AREA--
- CAPABLE OF RAISING THE DEAD?
?!
WHAT THE--
--oh, I GETCHA, MATE! 'AD A BIT OF A ROUGH NIGHT, DIDJA?
YA MIGHT TRY THE "FOX AN' FERRET," DOWN THE STREET
FOX AND FERRET
FOX & FERRET
"IF THAT PLACE CAN'T BRING YA BACK TA LIFE, NOTHIN' CAN!"
SOON...
& TOBACCO
BLIMEY, 'E'S GONE! I CAN'T TAKE THAT BLOKE ANYWHERE!
PARDON, M'UM, BUT IF YER LOOKIN' FER THE FELLA WHAT LOOKS LIKE A BIG POTATO...
WELL, WELL, WOT'VE WE GOT 'ERE?
LOOKS LIKE A BIT OF A TOFF T'ME.
TOFF, ME ARSE--'E LOOKS LIKE A BLOOMIN' PUFF, 'E DO!

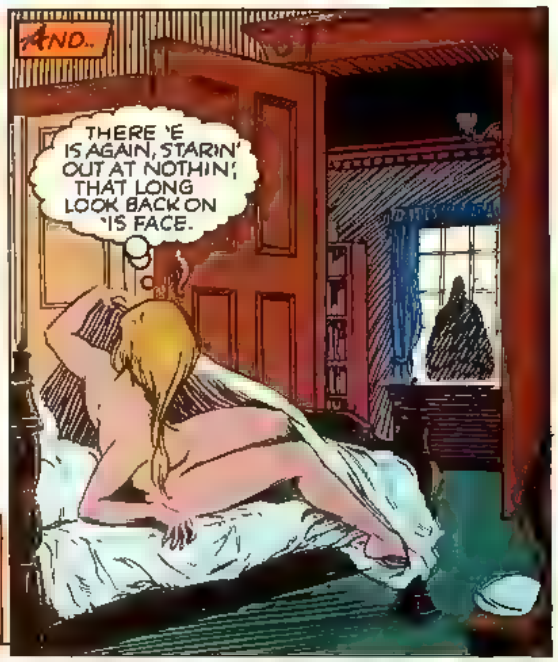
THAT RIGHT, MATE? YOU A PUFF?
I SHOULD THINK IT APPARENT THAT MY MASS IS MORE SOLID THAN THAT, SIR--
--EVEN TO A GENTLEMAN OF SUCH LIMITED ERUDITION AS YOURSELF
HUH?! YA FANCY-DAN JACKASS! I'LL SLIT YA FROM--
'OLD IT, GUV! I'M FLYNN-- SCOTLAND YARD-- AN' THIS 'ERE BLOKE'S ME ASSISTANT!
G'WAN, LASS, THE YARD DON'T USE NO DAMES!
Uh, RIGHT! A-AN' I'M NOT A DAME! I'M A MAN WOT'S ALL DRESSED UP! WE'RE AFTER A MOLESTER WORKIN' THIS AREA!
WELL, NOW, "CONSTABLE," I GOTS TA SAY THAT'S ONE HELL OF A DISGUISE!
HAW! HAW!
AWRIGHT, I'LL PROVE IT! I'LL ARM-TUSSLE ANY MAN IN THE ROOM!
'AN, I'LL BEAT 'IM, TOO!
LADY, IF YA KIN BEATS ME, YER A BETTER MAN THAN I AM!
RIGHT! I'LL JUST CLEAR THIS 'ERE TABLE--
--'AN TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TA SMEAR A BIT O' ME SLIPPERY FACE MAKE-UP ON YS SIDE OF IT--

--AN' WE LL START WHEN YA COUNT TA THREE!

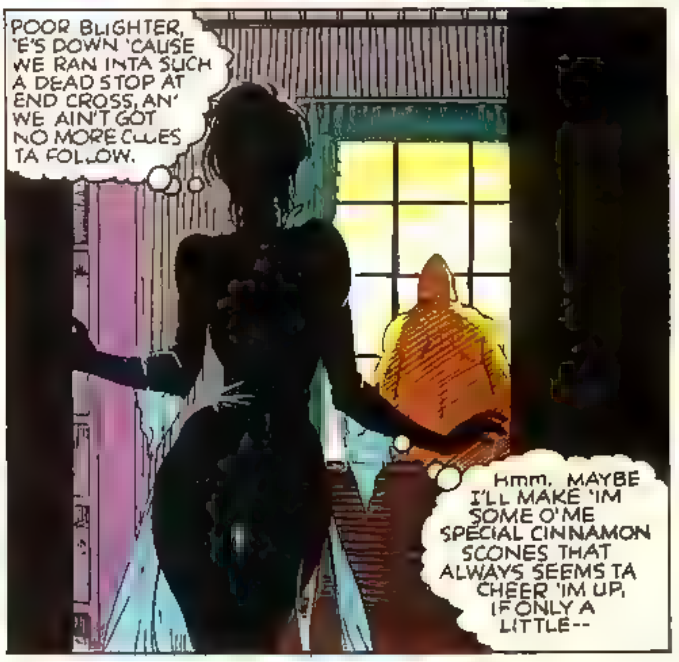
YER ON! ONE... TWO...
...THREEEEEEEEEEP!

BLIMEY! THAT IS ONE HELL OF A D SGUISE!

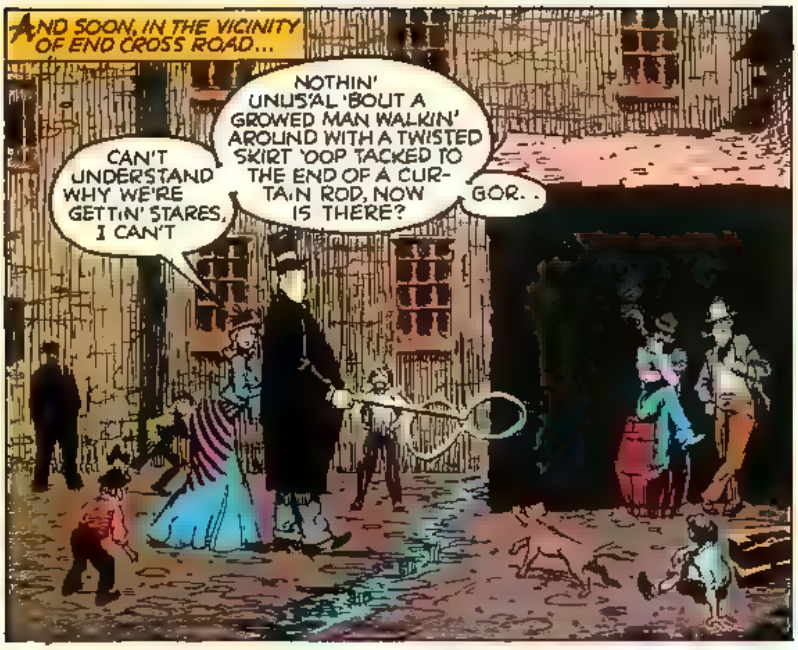
EVENING AND NIGHT PASS UNEVENTFULLY.
DAWN CRACKS CLOUDED SKIES ONCE MORE.


AND..
THERE 'E IS AGAIN, STARIN' OUT AT NOTHIN'; THAT LONG LOOK BACK ON 'IS FACE.

SEEMS 'IS 'APPY TIMES DON'T LAST NO LONGER'N A BLINK 'E'S ALMOST LIKE A LOST KID, 'E IS

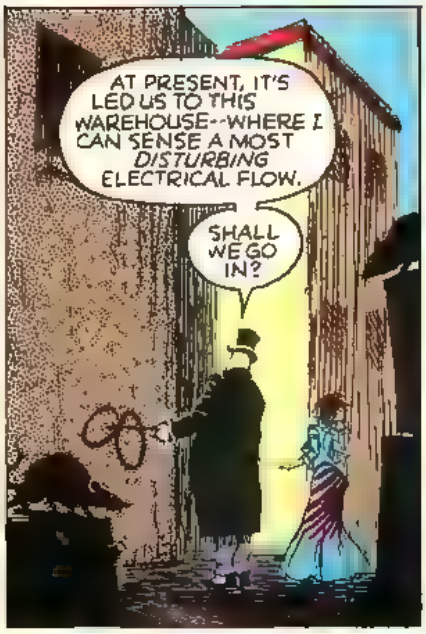

POOR BLIGHTER, 'E'S DOWN 'CAUSE WE RAN INTA SUCH A DEAD STOP AT END CROSS, AN' WE AIN'T GOT NO MORE CLUES TA FOLLOW.
Hmm. MAYBE I'LL MAKE 'IM SOME O'ME SPECIAL CINNAMON SCONES THAT ALWAYS SEEMS TA CHEER 'IM UP, IF ONLY A LITTLE--

- LORD!
NO!
BOZZY! DON'T! G-GIVE ME THE GUN!
THAT'S IT! S-S-SLOWLY NOW! JUST EASE UP ON THE FINGERS AN'
..WHEW BOZZY, DON'T SCARE ME LIKE THAT.
I WAS MERELY RECREATING THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT IN MY MIND, MANDY. I THOUGHT THE FIREARM MIGHT HELP.
Uh-huh.
LOOK, BOZZY, THE CASE AIN'T CLOSED YET. WE JUST GOTTA KEEP PLUGGIN' AWAY AT IT, IS ALL WHO KNOWS--
--MAYBE THE VERY CLUE WE NEED'LL JUST DROP INTA OUR LAPS LIKE A BOLT FROM THE BLUE!
WHY, MANDY, I DO BELIEVE THAT IT JUST HAS!


AND SOON, IN THE VICINITY OF END CROSS ROAD...
CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY WE'RE GETTIN' STARES, I CAN'T
NOTHIN' UNUS'AL 'BOUT A GROWED MAN WALKIN' AROUND WITH A TWISTED SKIRT 'OOP TACKED TO THE END OF A CURTA.N ROD, NOW IS THERE?
GOR..

AS I EXPLAINED AT THE HOUSE, MANDY, YOUR "BOLT FROM THE BLUE" STATEMENT REMINDED ME OF THE DEATH OF THAT UNFORTUNATE MISS GRIEVES--
--AND IT BECAME APPARENT THAT THE FORCE REFERED TO HERE AS *ELECTRICITY* MUST SOMEHOW BE INVOLVED IN THE WHOLE AFFAIR.

THEREFORE, BY UTILIZING WHAT YOU CALL A *DOWSING ROD*, MY SENSORY METABOLISM IS ABLE TO DETECT UNUSUAL SURGES IN THAT FORCE.
AND HOPEFULLY, THAT WILL LEAD US TO THE FELLOW WITH THE FOUR-FINGERED HAND.


AT PRESENT, IT'S LED US TO THIS WAREHOUSE--WHERE I CAN SENSE A MOST *DISTURBING* ELECTRICAL FLOW.
SHALL WE GO IN?

JUST LIKE THAT? BOZZY, SEE THAT GUY BY THE DOOR? THE ONE WITH *MUSCLES* ON 'IS MUSCLES? 'OW WE GONNA GET BY 'IM?

I SUPPOSE I COULD TRY SWOONIN' 'IM. OR MAYBE WE SHOULD GO BACK FER THE REVOLVER. OR -

- WHOOOOOP!
I BELIEVE I KNOW A WAY IN, MANDY

PUT ME DOWN, YA 'EAR! PUT ME--
..GOR, I HATE WHEN 'E DOES THIS...!
I SWEAR, BOZZY, IF YA EVER PULL THAT STUNT AGAIN,
WE'RE INSIDE.
WELL, uh, YEAH, BUT--
THE PULSES ARE COMING FROM THIS DIRECTION.
I DO BELIEVE WE'VE FOUND IT, MANDY
IT? WOT "IT"?!
OOOO. I AIN'T SEEN SUCH MACHIN'RY SINCE I VISITED THE FACT'RY WHERE ME MUM WORKED!
BUT WOT'RE THEM WELL-TOFFED GENTS DOIN' IN A PLACE LIKE THIS?

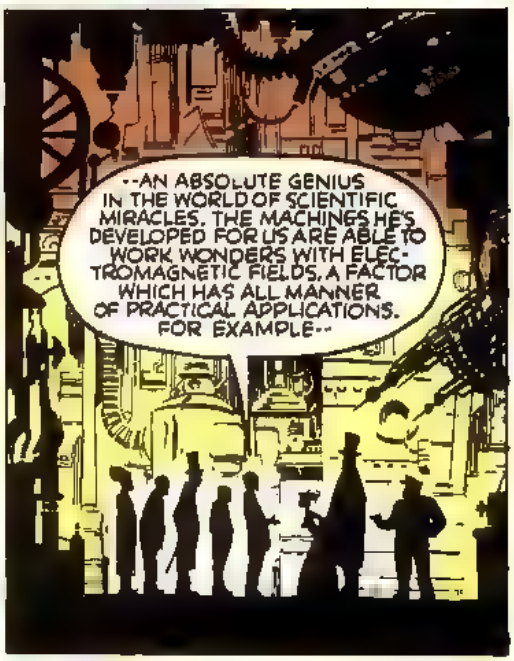
WHYN'T YA COME ALONG AN' ASK 'EM Y'SELF, MISSY?
AWWWW, BUGGER!

SOON...
Mr. PEEBLES? I FOUND THESE TRESPASSERS LURKIN' ON THE UPPER STAIRS. THOUGHT YA MIGHT WANT A FEW WORDS WITH 'EM.
THANK YOU, RODNEY

STUFF THE CHIT-CHAT ROUTINE, GUV'NOR! I'M FLYNN, INSPECTOR FER THE, um, MINISTRY OF 'EALTH! A-AN' IF YA DON'T LET US GO RIGHT AWAY, WELL--
--I'LL SLAP YA WITH A DOZEN VIOLATIONS SO FAST, IT'LL--

THERE'S NO NEED TO CONTINUE YOUR PRETENSE, MISS FLYNN. LORD GILES INFORMED US OF THE ATTRACTIVE JOURNALIST AND MOUNTAINOUS PHOTOGRAPHER WHO VISITED HIM YESTERDAY.
EVEN SO, SUCH SPUNK DESERVES AN EXPLANATION.
IT...IT DOES?

CERTAINLY--SINCE YOU'LL NOT HAVE A CHANCE TO USE IT ANYWAY YOU SEE, MY COLLEAGUES AND I HAVE FORMED A LIMITED CORPORATION CALLED THE HAND OF FOUR.
THROUGH IT, WE HAVE SPONSORED THE WORK OF Dr. PRETORIUS--

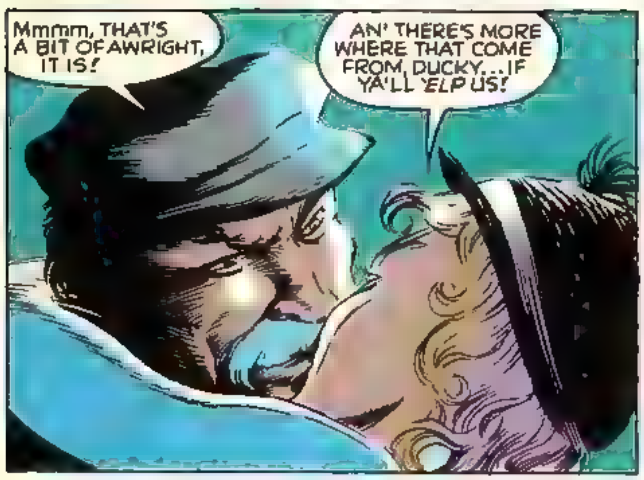

--AN ABSOLUTE GENIUS IN THE WORLD OF SCIENTIFIC MIRACLES. THE MACHINES HE'S DEVELOPED FOR US ARE ABLE TO WORK WONDERS WITH ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELDS, A FACTOR WHICH HAS ALL MANNER OF PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS. FOR EXAMPLE--

--THEY CAN BE USED TO ENERGIZE A PORTABLE BATTERY WHICH CAN LATER RELEASE ITS CHARGE EXPLOSIVELY, IN A FORM VERY SIMILAR TO
...LIGHTNING!
THEN IT WAS YOU! YOU WOT SLAYED THAT POOR MISS GRIEVES!
ALAS, SUCH A PRECAUTION WAS NECESSARY TO INSURE THE SECRECY OF OUR ORGANIZATION.
AND, UNFORTUNATELY, YOUR PRESENCE HERE SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT FURTHER MEASURES WILL BE REQUIRED.
BOZZY! TH-THEY'RE GONNA 'URT US! DO SOMETHIN'!
NORMALLY, SIR, I ABHOR VIOLENCE. BUT I'M AFRAID THAT IF YOU DON'T RELEASE US IMMEDIATELY--
--I SHALL BE FORCED TO GIVE YOU A RATHER DIRE THRASHING
DOCTOR?
YA, HERR PEEBLES! I UNDERSTAND! VE VILL SHOW DER GENTLEMAN THAT VE CAN USE OUR ELECTRIC FIELDS FOR MANY THINGS!
INCLUDING--
SLAK

"-THIS!"
I SEEM TO BE CAUGHT IN A STASIS VORTEX. I CAN'T MOVE AT ALL.
HOW CURIOUS. .
MY.

THEY STOPPED BOZZY! WE'RE DONE FER!
UNLESS. .

OH, PLEASE! I-I'M SO FRIGHTENED, AN' YER SO STRONG!
YOLD ME--!


Mmmm, THAT'S A BIT OF AWRIGHT, IT IS!
AN' THERE'S MORE WHERE THAT COME FROM, DUCKY,...IF YA'LL 'ELP US!

NICE TRY, GORGEOUS, BUT YER WASTIN' YER TIME. ME 'EART'S MADE O' STONE!
OH?

AN' WOT'RE THESE MADE OF?
OONT
THRAK
UUUUUUUU
CAN'T GO WALTZIN' THROUGH TRE FRONT DOOR!
AN' WITHOUT BOZZY'S FLOATIN' TRICKS, I GUESS I'LL JUST 'AVE TA FIND A WAY OUT ON ME--
--OW--
-WHOOOOOP!
SLA-
PLAK
SNNF
NOT EXACTLY A LADYLIKE EXIT, BUT IT DID GET ME PAST THAT BRUISER AT THE DOOR!
SO WOT NOW? IF I CALLS IN THE COPPERS, THEY MIGHT FIND WOT BOZZ REALLY IS! AN' BESIDES, I DON'T GOT NO REAL EVIDENCE THAT THE 'AND O' FOUR IS DOIN' ANYTHIN' ILLEGAL!
BLAST! I GOTTA ELP BOZZY, BUT 'OW--

KREEEESH
E..LO.
GOLDANG IT, YA DIRTY SIDE-WINDERS! FUN IS FUN--
--BUT NOW YA GONE AN' SCRATCHED MUH STETSON!
YEEEEEEEEHAH!
KRAK
THRAP
CHUD
THA WHAM

THAT'S THREE DOWN AN'--
--HUH. I THOUGHT SHORE THERE WERE FOUR O' THESE POLECATS!
THERE WERE!
KREKSH
WHU--?
NO NEED TA THANK ME, YANK--BUT I WILL LET YA REPAY THE FAVOR.
I'VE GOT ANY PUNCH LEFT!
HECK, L'IL LADY--
--THAT SPARRIN' MATCH JUST WHETTED MUH APPETITE FOR A REAL FIGHT!
JUST LEMME GRAB MUH HAT AN' I'LL BE RIGHT WITH YUH!
FINE BY ME! BY THE WAY, MUH NAME'S SALEM--SALEM HAWKSHAW!
IT'S DOWN 'ERE!
BACK ON THE BARE KNUCKLES CIRCUIT IN THE STATES THEY USE TA CALL ME "MADMAN!"
YOU KIN CALL ME "SWEETHEART!"
SHH! THAT'S THE PLACE! A FRIEND O' MINE'S BEIN' 'ELD INSIDE BY A BAND O' PRETTY TOUGH--
--'OLD ON! THAT BLOKE WOT'S GETTIN' OUTTA THE CARRIAGE! IT'S--

--LORD GILES! IT'S 'IM WOT'S AT THE 'EART OF ALL THIS!

COME ON!
SHORE THING, LI'L LADY!

MOVE ASIDE, MATE, WE GOT URGENT NEWS FER LORD GILES!
ASSUMIN' THERE'S SUCH A PERSON ON THE PREMISES, MISSY I'M SURE HE'D BE RIGHT BUSY

WHYN'T YA JUST GIVE IT TA ME?

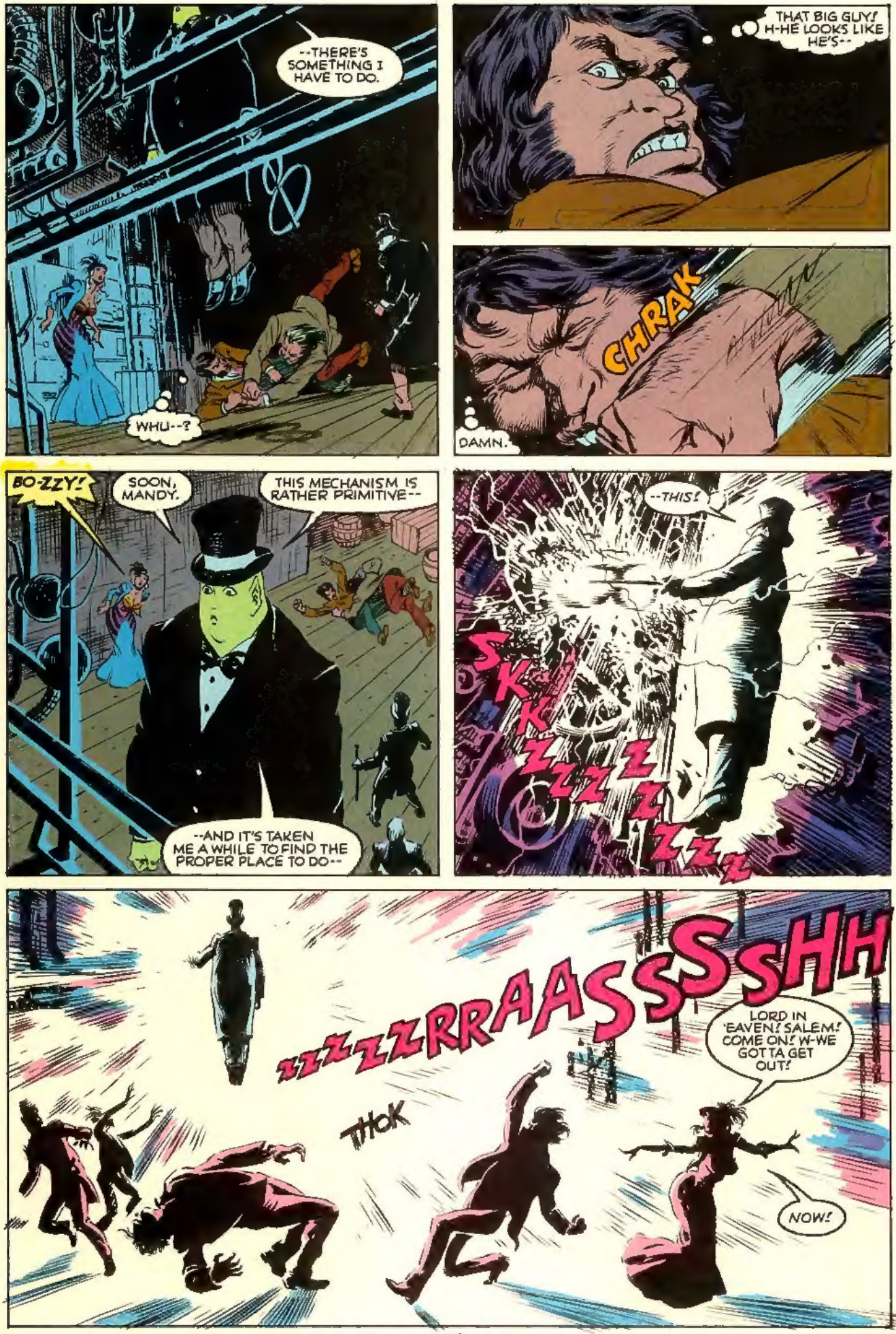
THRAM

AH THOUGHT HE'D NEVER ASK

THAT'S 'IM WOT I WANT RESCUED--THE BLOKE COVERED BY ALL THAT SPARKLY STUFF!
LORDY! HE SHORE IS A SIZEABLE FELLER!
LISTEN!

WELL, WELL, IF IT ISN'T THE SQUAWKING PHOTOGRAPHER. I'M TOLD THAT YOUR LOVELY COMPANION IS CURRENTLY AT LIBERTY--
--A SITUATION SOON TO BE REMEDIED I ASSURE YOU.
FOR YOU ARE DEALING WITH *TRUE* POWER HERE-- THE POWER OF *MONEY*. MY ASSOCIATES ARE FROM SOME OF THE OLDEST *RICHEST* FAMILIES IN ALL OF ENGLAND--
--AND THEY HAVE BANDED TOGETHER TO SEE THAT THEY REMAIN THAT WAY, BY ALLEVIATING THE WORRISOME GROWTH OF INFLUENCE AMONGST THE ANNOYING *MIDDLE CLASS*
TO DO THAT, THEY HAVE GIVEN Dr. PRETORIUS GENEROUS ENDOWMENTS FOR DEVELOPING MACHINES THAT CAN DUPLICATE THE ELECTRICAL AURAS THAT WE CALL... *LIFE!* YES, THESE VERY MACHINES AROUND YOU WERE DESIGNED FOR THE SPECIFIC TASK OF--
--RESURRECTION!
I SHOULD KNOW, FOR I MYSELF HAVE BEEN BROUGHT BACK *TWICE!* THE HAND SAW IN ME A POTENTIAL FOR PUBLIC OFFICE, AN ABILITY TO MANIPULATE EMOTIONS.
THEREFORE, THEY OFFERED VIRTUAL IMMORTALITY IN EXCHANGE FOR MY IMAGE AND POLITICAL TALENTS.
I AM, IF YOU WILL, THE *THUMB* THAT MAKES THE HAND OF FOUR WORK!
INDEED, AND ONCE INSTALLED AS PRIME MINISTER, LORD GILES WILL ADVISE THE QUEEN AS WE SEE FIT. HE WILL ADVISE STRONGLY AGAINST UNIONIZATION EFFORTS AND THE VOTE OF THE CITIES. HE WILL INSURE THAT OUR OWN POWER WILL REMAIN UNDIMINISHED...
..FOREVER!

GOR! THEM BLOKES IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN I THOUGHT! WE GOTTA GET BOZZ LOOSE AN' GET SOME EVIDENCE FER THE COPPERS!
Hmm, THAT SWITCH IS WOT THE LITTLE 'UN IN THE APRON THREW TA TRAP BOZZY, BUT IT'S TOO FAR AWAY--!
DON'T WORRY, MA'AM!
DOWN IN LAREDO, WE CALL THIS THE OL' FLIPPEROO!
THWWIP
SPAK
DER MACHINES! DEY HAF STOPPED!
PZZT!
IT'S THAT WOMAN! AND ANOTHER INTRUDER!
GET THEM!
MY PLEASURE, SAR!
SHOOT! THAT JOKER FROM THE DOOR DIDN'T STAY DOWN FOR THE COUNT!
I MUSTA JUST GRAZED 'IM!
LET'S GO, BOZZY! WE GOTTA GET OUT OF 'ERE!
IN A MOMENT, MANDY. FIRST--

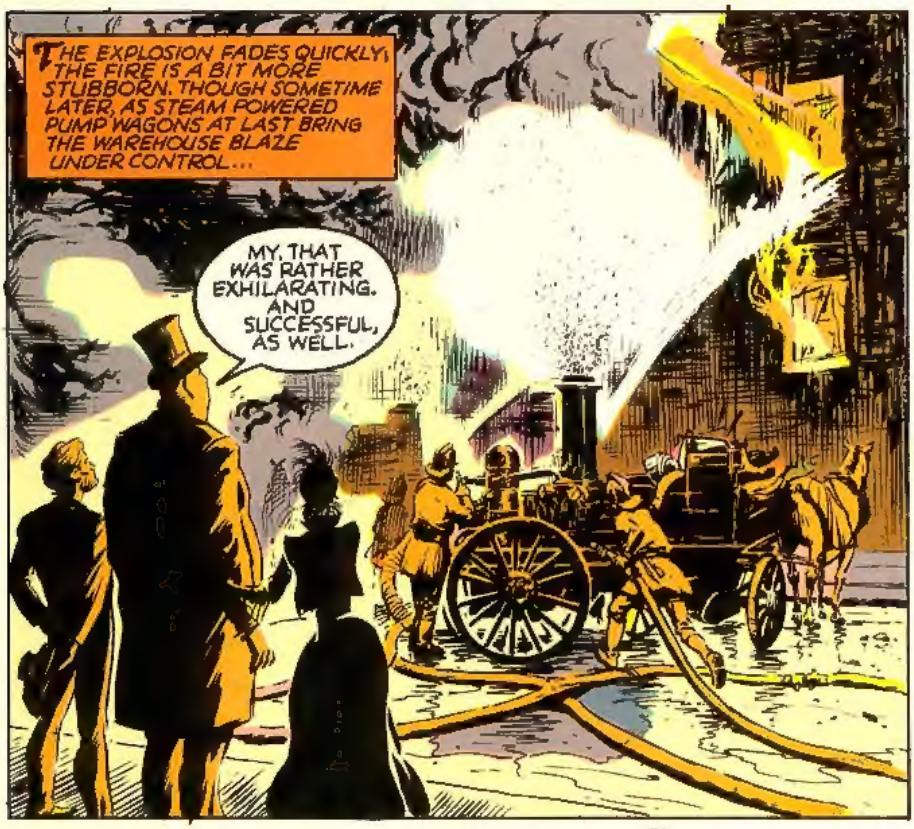

--THERE'S SOMETHING I HAVE TO DO.
WHU--?
THAT BIG GUY! H-HE LOOKS LIKE HE'S--
CHRAK
DAMN.
BO-ZZY!
SOON, MANDY.
THIS MECHANISM IS RATHER PRIMITIVE--
--AND IT'S TAKEN ME A WHILE TO FIND THE PROPER PLACE TO DO--
--THIS!
SK K ZZZZZZZZZZ
ZZZZRRAASSSSHH
LORD IN 'EAVEN! SALEM! COME ON! W-WE GOTTA GET OUT!
THOK
NOW!

DER MACHINES ARE OFERLOADING!
PRETORIUS! DON'T BE A FOOL!
THERE'S ENOUGH CURRENT THERE TO FRY A CLYDESDALE!

BLAST! IF THAT IDIOT GETS *HIMSELF* KILLED, THERE'LL BE NO ONE TO RESURRECT ME!
PRETORIUS! GET BACK HERE--

KRRRZZZZZ
--RRRRRREEEEE!

ZZZZRRAATCCHOWWM


THE EXPLOSION FADES QUICKLY; THE FIRE IS A BIT MORE STUBBORN. THOUGH SOMETIME LATER, AS STEAM POWERED PUMP WAGONS AT LAST BRING THE WAREHOUSE BLAZE UNDER CONTROL...
MY, THAT WAS RATHER EXHILARATING. AND SUCCESSFUL, AS WELL.

WE SOLVED THE CASE, DESTROYED THE CULPRITS' PLANS, AND SAW TO IT THAT THEIR NEFARIOUS DEEDS MIGHT NEVER BE REPEATED.
I AM SORRY, THOUGH, THAT WE WEREN'T ABLE TO COLLECT THE FEE THAT ALWAYS SEEMS TO DELIGHT YOU, MANDY.

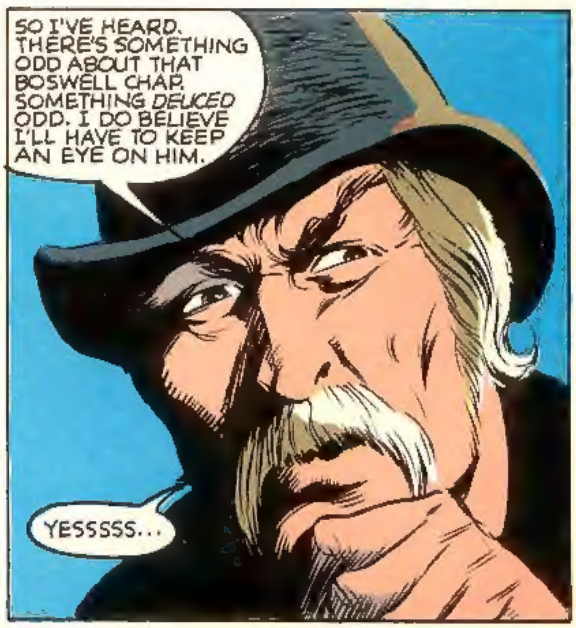
Oh, I WOULDN'T LOSE NO SNORIN' TIME OVER THAT, BOZZY. Y'SEE, I SORTA BUMPED INTA ONE O' THEM GENTS WHILE 'E WAS RUNNIN' AWAY--

--AN' JUST LOOK WOT POPPED OUT OF 'IS POCKET RIGHT INTA ME 'AND!

THAT'S ALL DANDY FOR YOU FOLKS, BUT I GOT ME SOME QUESTIONS! LIKE F'RINSTANCE, I COULD SWEAR I SAW THIS BIG GALOOT *FLOATIN'!*
TELL YA WOT, SALEM, COME ALONG AN' WE'LL 'AVE US A LITTLE CHAT, eh? IT'S LIKE THIS:

ONCE UPON A TIME...

THAT THEM, CONSTABLE?
YESSIR, INSPECTOR FITZROY. BIG FELLA AN' THE LADY ARE BOSWELL AN' FLYNN. FANCY 'EMSELVES DETECTIVES. BEEN SHOWIN' UP AT A NUMBER OF UNUSUAL CASES OF LATE.


SO I'VE HEARD. THERE'S SOMETHING ODD ABOUT THAT BOSWELL CHAP, SOMETHING *DEUCED* ODD. I DO BELIEVE I'LL HAVE TO KEEP AN EYE ON HIM.
YESSSSS...